

Running Header: As Leaders We Must Pave The Way For Our Young Soldiers

As Leaders We Must Pave The Way For Our Young Soldiers

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Outline

Thesis: Ethical dilemmas face leaders' everyday; however as leaders we must be an example for all Soldiers to emulate. Being ethical is not always easy, but we must take what we have learned over the years and apply it to the ethical decision-making process.

I. Introduction

A. The military is blend by different regulations for guidance. Personal ethics of leaders and Soldiers alike is one reason why we have the greatest Army in the world. As leaders we make certain we set the ethical example and ensure there is constant communication within our unit at all times. As leaders one thing we cannot loss is our integrity. If our integrity is lost it will be nearly impossible to gain it back.

II. Body:

- A. Quote by father (Harry Lee Proctor)
- B. Realize who has came before
- C. Cultural norms
- D. Leaders Integrity

III. Ethical Dilemma

IV Conclusion

Abstract

Even with the warrior ethos, and a calling to the greater good, leaders are without a doubt still human. A leader's ethical behavior begins early in his/her career. Leaders are taught as young Soldiers how to conduct themselves at all times and take due notice of their surroundings. As leaders we have a duty to maintain and display behavior consistent with the seven Army values (Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage (acronym LDRSHIP)).

Body

Quote by father. Back when I was a child (before life removed all the innocence) growing up in Mississippi my father (Harry Lee Proctor) taught me the following quote by James Balwin “Your crown has been bought and paid for, now you must wear it well.” His explanation for teaching me the quote was: Over the years many Black folk have cried, been beaten, spit on, attacked by dogs, and even gave up their lives, just so I could have the same opportunity as any other person to live the American dream of being successful.

Realize who has come before. As leaders, we to must realize many leaders before us walked the same path we are on today, and in doing so they paved the way for us. Now, we must do them and ourselves justice by paving the way for our young Soldiers who walk behind us. We must take what we learn through out our years as leaders and apply it to the ethical decision-making process. Leaders must be problem solvers, not the ones causing the problems; taking initiative in the absence of orders; and leaving a legacy for our younger Soldiers to learn and grow from. The future of our Army demands all of this from today’s leaders.

Leaders must be an example for Soldiers to emulate when it comes to proper ethical behavior, in order for them to be successful and trustworthy in today’s military. Proper ethical behavior by leaders is the conduct expected of them because of their strong and unrelenting moral fortitude. This behavior represents the power of a leader’s integrity and seems to embody the military argument of “do the right thing.” This concept is very easy to explain or conceive; however, when applying it to ones self, it is far more complicated. Every problem is different and there is no model or outline that covers every situation leaders may encounter. Being in the military we are fortunate, to have general principles that shape our leaders’ conduct.

However, being ethical is not always easy. In many ethical dilemmas, leaders will choose the course of action with the least amount confrontation. This type of ethical conduct entices leaders to make the wrong decisions. The proper ethical behavior is very hazy at times and leaders must guard against moving to the wrong side of this line. Leaders should always remember that they have an obligation, to tell the truth. Ethics are important in all that we do each day. The secret to any type of ethical decision is realizing the far-reaching affects your decisions may have.

The Army has established a professional standard of ethics and values for our Soldiers, civilians' employees and leaders. Values are the Army's foundation, because of the personal ethics of our Soldiers, civilians' employees and leaders we are able to follow these values, making them more than words in an Army Field Manual (FM). As leaders we should never let our sense of morals get in the way of doing the right thing. Ethical issues greet leaders' everyday in our personal and professional lives. Soldiers and civilian employees bombard leaders daily with military and personal issues. Many leaders find dealing with these ethical issues perplexing. How, exactly, should leaders think through an ethical issue? What questions should we ask ourselves before making a decision? What factors should we bear in mind or consider?

Cultural Norms. Many times as leaders we act upon our feelings or cultural norms (When in Rome, do as the Romans do). How can leaders make sound ethical decisions thinking like this? Leaders must analyze all ethical issues and the decisions they make. This might be an obvious first step; however, it is not always easy getting the facts to make a sound decision. Some ethical decisions made by leaders create controversy simply because they do not check the facts before making their decision. Dealing with an ethical problem or making a decision is one of the most important in the decision making process; however, it is frequently overlooked.

Many leaders do not want to think outside the box for different answers to a problem because they are afraid their decision might be wrong. When it comes to making ethical decisions, leaders must analyze every situation individually and present a distinct answer for that specific problem. The book answer becomes the only answer for many leaders. As leaders we must let go of our pride and consult with other leaders on the more difficult ethical choices we face. We should make a habit of discussing and dialoguing with other leaders about problems.

Leaders must be honest, fair, and have the utmost integrity when dealing with Soldiers. Honesty is the most important thing a Soldier has. They will examine and assess us daily. Soldiers know when NCOs are not totally truthful in giving reports. Soldiers observe their first line supervisors giving false reports simply to make their units look better than they really are for inspections. We often make the error of believing Soldiers are not observing; however, they are.

Leaders Integrity. As leaders one thing we cannot lose is our integrity. If a leader gives away his/her integrity, it is nearly impossible to gain back. There are chances daily for leaders to disobey regulations or to compromise their integrity. However, quality leaders must withstand challenges of making the wrong decision, because sooner or later the facts will come out. Leaders should not establish a setting where their subordinates believe they must stretch a point, be untruthful, mislead, or defraud the government to please us. Leaders must have a “zero defects” mentality, when dealing with ethics. We should not accept ethical mistakes. Soldiers must realize while all Soldiers struggle to be flawless, leaders realize that the goal is unreachable. As leaders we must be willing to accept mistakes as long as our Soldiers gain the knowledge needed to not make that same mistakes over and over again. This shows Soldiers that we respect them for whom they are. Leaders must show their Soldiers respect. These same Soldiers are the future leaders of our Army. Parents, all over this great nation afford us the

amazing opportunity of leading and training their children. Our duty as leaders is to bring those Soldiers back to their parents, safe and more mature than when they gave them to us.

Personal ethics of leaders and Soldiers alike is one reason why we have the greatest Army in the world. Leaders must develop an ethical environment in their commands that assist in maintaining the Army's values. Leaders have to make certain they set the ethical example themselves and ensure there is constant communication within the unit at all times. Soldiers must know they can go to the chain of command for guidance on ethical decision they might be facing. Soldiers must have confidence in going to their leaders without being afraid of punishment, and know the decision making process will be there for them. Leaders have no choice, but to be the ethical standard bearers for Army's values; we must live them everyday. An old proverb states "If you give a child a fish you will feed him/her for a day, but if you teach a child to fish you will feed him/her for a lifetime." As leaders, we must do more than just give a Soldier the answer to an ethical dilemma to solve a particular problem. We must teach the Soldier how to solve the problem so he/she will become a problem solver for life. This is paving the way for our young Soldiers to become better leaders for years to come.

Ethical Dilemma

While on Temporary Duty (TDY) with an officer in my unit, I would always notice this young lady (not his wife) wherever we would go. She resided with him (in his hotel room) the entire TDY trip. I never mentioned anything to him about her, because I thought what he did in his private life was on him and none of my concern. Approximately six months before our unit was to change commanders, we received a complaint that a Soldier in our unit was committing adultery. Outraged by the action, the officer stated he was going to ensure the received non-judicial punishment for his actions. When I heard the officer's response in regards to the

information I was speechless, but really did not think he would press the issue. About two weeks later the officer and I traveled TDY to Fort Sill, OK where this officer was to administer non-judicial punishment to the Soldier for committing adultery. While enroute, I informed him his actions were wrong and reflected a double standard. He asked me to explain myself. I stated, each TDY trip we went on he was accompanied or met the same young lady upon arrival at our TDY location. After I explained myself, I asked was this same type of behavior he was about administer non-judicial punishment to this Soldier for committing. His response was “what he does in his private time is on him and not me.” Two hours after we arrived at the hotel in Fort Sill the same young lady appeared. The next day while the officer was talking to the Soldier that committed the adultery offense, I could not look at the Soldier, because I knew this was not appropriate. I knew what to do, but I did not do it. I tried to rationalize with myself, but it was not working. I knew I did not do the right thing when I stood by and watched the Soldier receive non-judicial punishment. On the drive back from Fort Sill, he kept asking me “why I was not talking” and again I told him that I just failed a Soldier. Throughout this entire paper, I have been talking about what a true leader should do when faced with an ethical dilemma. I truly failed a Soldier when I did not report the actions and behavior of this officer each time we were TDY. His actions and behavior mirrored that of the Soldier he issued non-judicial punishment to that day in Fort Sill. There is not a day that passes where I do not think about the Soldier I failed and the events that I allowed to take place. As a leader, reporting the actions and behavior of this officer to our supervisor, regardless of the outcome, was the appropriate action to take in the situation.

In Conclusion:

There is a song entitled “You Must Pray,” by J. Moss a famous Gospel Singer. The song states “If I was a writer I would use my pencil, if I was a singer I would use my voice, if I was a doctor I would use my research, my hands if I was a potter, I would deliver a prolific dissertation if I was a speaker.” The above professions I am not, but what I am, is a Senior Noncommissioned Officer in the greatest Army in the world with the passion, moral courage, common sense and dignity to make proper ethical decisions at all times. I owe this to the Lord above, my family, the military and most of all my Soldiers. I know I made a mistake by not informing higher of the Commander’s act; however, I have learned from the mistake and will not make it again.